MID-TERM EDUCATION ISSUE

THE

Commonweal

The Secularization of Culture

EDUCATION AND THE STATE

by Christopher Dawson

Freedom in the University

ASSAULT FROM WITHIN

by Lawrence Podell

In the Elementary School

THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

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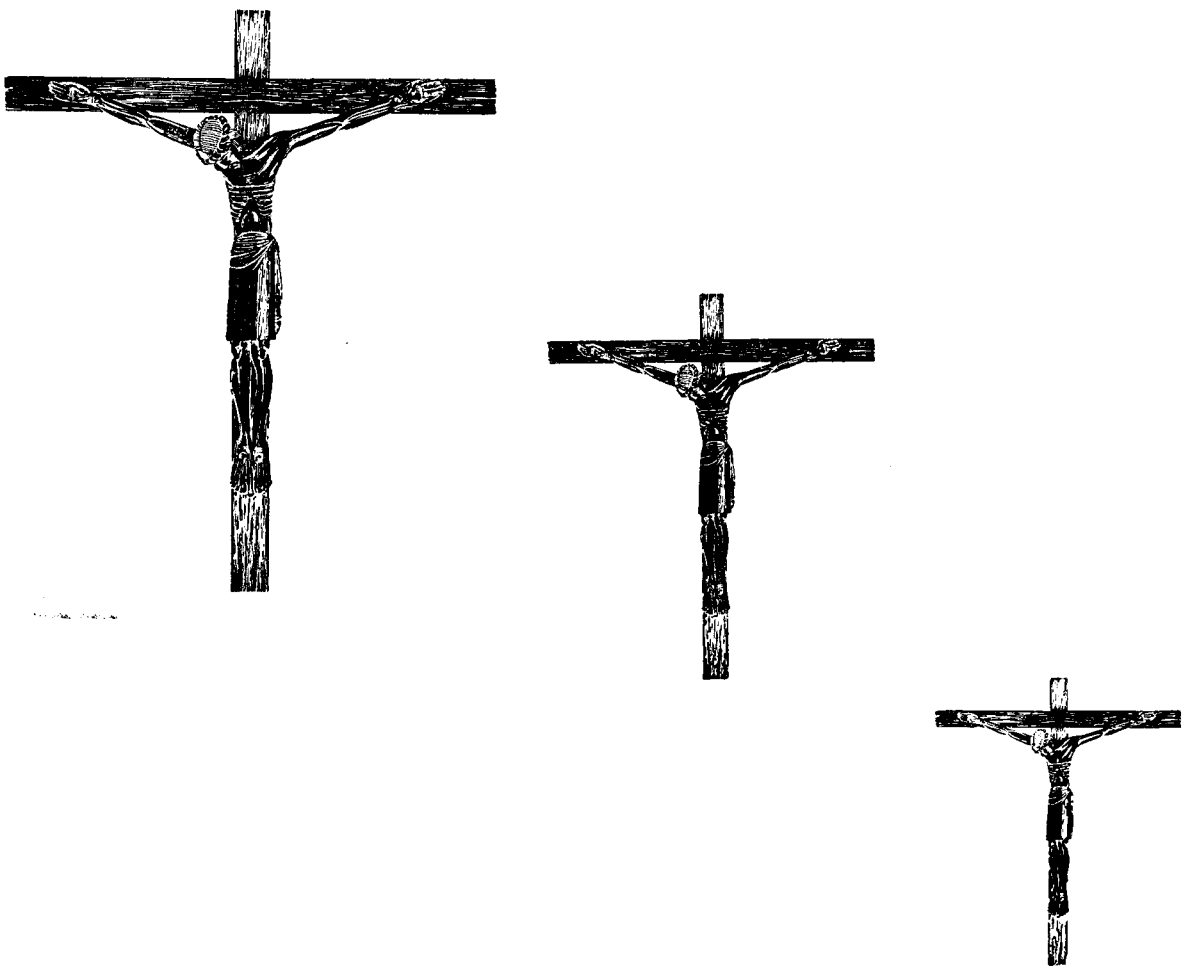

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

THE RECENT resignation of Sir Anthony Eden as Prime Minister after only twenty-one months in the post and the appointment of Harold Macmillan as his successor are an index of how strained the Anglo-American alliance is.

When Sir Anthony became Prime Minister twenty-one months ago his appointment seemed like the operation of manifest destiny. He was admired on both sides of the Atlantic for his diplomatic skill and experience, and even though Britain was long past the peak of her power, Sir Anthony was directing a nation whose moral and political force was so great that her claim to be a world power was still respected.

The Suez adventure has changed all that. Britain, in effect, lost a week-long war against a third-rate power, seriously sapped her economic strength and weakened her moral position in the eyes of the free world. Anthony Eden, broken in health and political reputation, has been replaced by a man who, in contrast to Sir Anthony's propitious beginnings, is little known abroad, and presides at home over a nation torn by the Suez debacle.

In announcing, as he did, that one of his primary objectives in foreign policy would be to repair relations with the United States, Prime Minister Macmillan was merely identifying one element in Britain's current crisis—the fact that this nation was angered at not being consulted before the Suez invasion, denounced it when it occurred, and helped to defeat it when in progress.

But the weakening of Anglo-American relations goes back farther than the Suez incident, which only exposed in a dramatic way how weak the roots of the Anglo-American alliance actually were. This weakness stems from the fact that there was an actual alliance—a partnership of effort and policy—in only one portion of the world, Western Europe, where the United States and Britain were the bulwarks of NATO. In confronting other danger spots—the Far and Middle East, Cyprus, the uncommitted nations of Asia and Africa—the diplomats of both countries talked as if they were allies but actually talked across the dangerously wide gulf which separated their respective attitudes and policies. When these differences flared up so noticeably that they could not be glossed over—as with Indochina in 1955 and Quemoy in 1955—representatives of both countries patiently explained that "monolithic uniformity" was not necessary among allies; Suez in 1956 made both countries aware that the issue was not monolithic uniformity, but mutual confidence and understanding. Without these, there cannot be an alliance: there can only be the tragic sequence of uncoordinated, fumbling and even contradictory policies of alleged allies with regard to such important issues as Cyprus, Egypt, the Baghdad Pact and Communist China.

IN SUCH a situation, the United States and Britain simply cannot continue to gloss over fundamental differences with glowing allusions to Anglo-American "friendship." Such friendship may strengthen an alliance, but it cannot support one. International alliances must be based on a community of interest, common plans of action, and a shared risk. Where these do not exist—as they have not existed in many areas of the Anglo-American relation—an alliance is impossible, and even friendship is jeopardized, as Suez has shown.

It may well be, then, since the lessons of the past are still fresh, that this country and Great Britain can rebuild their alliance on a more solid and realistic approach. Both nations, as a start, must recognize that the future of freedom is, to

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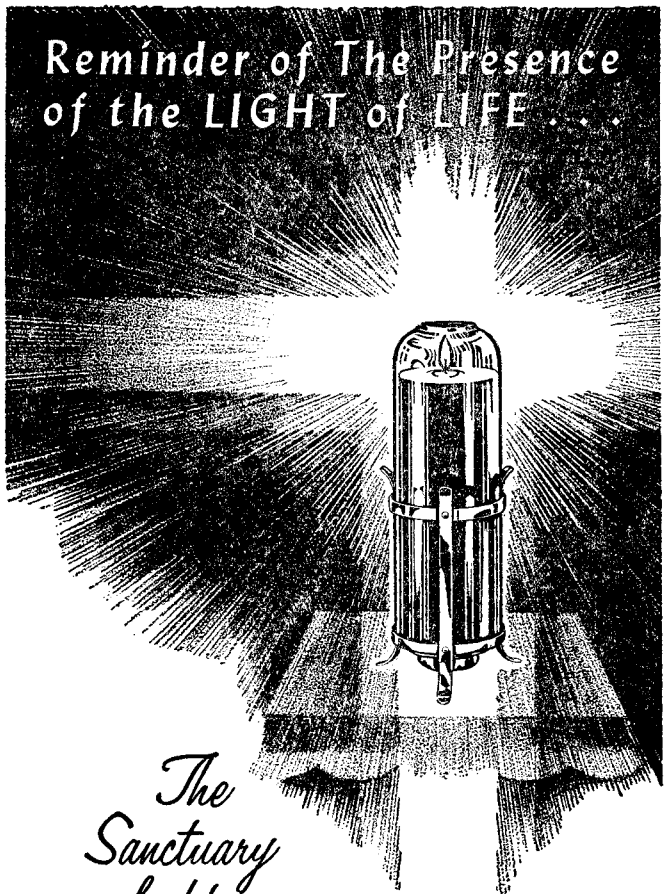

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a great extent, within their combined keeping, and that for either to attempt "to go it alone" in a vital area of the world may well create a vacuum into which the Soviet whirlwind may rush.

Again, while recognizing that each nation may have national interests not identical with one's own, it is imperative that both countries effect sweeping changes in certain broad approaches to policy. This country cannot be expected to support England in the nineteenth century manner which she indulged, for example, in exiling Archbishop Makarios from Cyprus, or in her high-handed assault upon the Suez Canal.

For her part, Britain has a right to expect from this country something better than the *laissez faire* politics which marked, until quite recently, our actions in the Middle East. Nor can Britain but be apprehensive at the rigid, almost ritualistic "anti-colonialism" of the type displayed by Secretary Dulles when he laid Britain's anger at President Nasser's seizure of the Suez to her "colonial interests," without seeming to realize that the Canal is, literally, Britain's economic lifeline.

Each nation, in short, has errors of omission and commission in the past which helped to weaken their mutual trust. A frank recognition of that fact would be a good place for Prime Minister Macmillan—and Secretary Dulles—to begin repairing the indispensable Anglo-American alliance.

LAITY IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A RECENT article in *Ave Maria,* a national Catholic weekly, dealt with a survey of the attitudes of lay teachers to the Catholic schools in which they taught. The chief complaints of the teachers were that they were inadequately paid (almost seventy per cent voiced this complaint); were not given contracts assuring tenure, health benefits, etc.; and were not given a sense of full participation in faculty conferences and decisions.

Such a survey, incomplete as it is, nevertheless spells out a warning to the administrators of Catholic schools, which will have to rely more and more heavily in the future upon the lay teacher. Those Catholic schools which accept this fact only grudgingly can hardly be considered either schools or Catholic in the fullest sense of either term. No teacher can be effective if distracted by grave concern for his financial future, or forced to take additional jobs to provide for himself and his family. The best teachers will refuse to stay in a school where they are treated as second-class members of the faculty, or where no recognition is given of their professional needs or accomplishments. The school which does not recognize these facts is committed to planned mediocrity.

Even apart from the educational implications of the complaints registered in the *Ave Maria* survey, the question of simple justice remains. The papal encyclicals are quite clear on the principle of a living wage, and deal at length with the dignity to be accorded the employee. Failure to accord either to the lay teachers in a Catholic school cannot be justified by either economic expediency or pious exhortations; such failure is a mockery of the social teachings of the Church, and hardly calculated to foster its educational mission.

HEMISPHERE ADVANCE

THE DIFFICULTIES that the negotiators have had in reaching an agreement about that rocky island in the Southern Atlantic are one sign of renewed Latin American determination to push ahead. By a special letter, Mr. Eisenhower has made it clear to President Kubitschek that Fernando de Noronha island would be extremely important as a tracking station for missiles launched from our Patrick Air Force Base.

Armed with this knowledge, the Brazilian Nationalists and Communists have made it politically impossible for their President to accede to this request unless he obtains a number of concessions. It is reported that these include new credits for hydro-electric development and the expansion of the Brazilian steel industry, two dozen coastal ships (from our mothball fleet) to be paid for over a period of nine years, extensive aid in building strategic coastal roads and naval stations, guaranteed oil deliveries and completion of the loan recently approved by the Export-Import Bank. The "compensations" asked are so substantial that this country has been forced to consider withdrawing its request.

The argument is that granting such a base might provoke an attack by the Communist Powers and that Brazil, therefore, must be economically and militarily fortified. In the United Nations, where eighteen Latin American countries are pushing a statute that would set up a UN fund for economic development, a Brazilian, Benedito Valladares, criticized those nations that do not go along with the idea. Those who say that defense expenditures must come first he accuses of putting the cart before the horse. He sees little hope for disarmament "if

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it is not realized that the roots of war are economic and that the best road to peace is through economic development."

But it is hardly necessary to accept either of these Brazilian views to recognize that throughout the southern half of our hemisphere there now is a greater urge to economic development than ever before. Despite lack of technical training, inflation, big debts, budgetary deficits and political instability, there is greater opportunity to build up the Other Americas in the common interest. This can involve individual investors, private enterprise and government agencies. And the least our government can do is to back strongly the enabling Latin American resolution in the UN.

A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

TOO MANY people, including President Eisenhower, it seems quite logical to select for positions of responsibility and trust within the government those who have already proved their ability in the business world. But the advantages, so seemingly apparent, are accompanied by risks, apparently less obvious.

The most recent of these "risks" to gain public attention has occasioned Robert Ross, Assistant Secretary of Defense, to take a "leave of absence" until the present, muddled situation is settled. For the situation is this. Before joining the government Mr. Ross severed connections with two firms which were, and are, headed by his wife. While he has been in government office his wife's companies, as responsible low bidder, have been awarded large defense contracts.

When knowledge of the contracts came to public attention, the Senate Permanent Investigations subcommittee asked the obvious question: did the awarding of these contracts violate the "conflict of interest" law, which says that a U.S. official must not be either "directly or indirectly interested" in a corporation with which he must deal for the Government?

Some answers were immediately forthcoming. Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson said that "It's bad enough to make a man sell everything he owns, but if he has to divorce his wife, too, that's going pretty far." It was quickly pointed out that in a choice between job, contracts, and wife there were other alternatives than divorce. More seriously, one could suggest that Mr. Wilson failed to see the real problem. For he was attempting to apply business standards to government acts without being aware of the dangers involved.

In private business, to suggest a simple, pertinent example, a man might conscientiously attempt to bring added contracts to his wife's firm. But when he is in a government position, dealing with large sums of public monies, safeguards are needed to see that personal advantage is not gained at the cost of public benefit. The "conflict of interest" law is one such safeguard. The law has obvious disadvantages: it may mean that some businessmen can accept governmental posts only at a sacrifice; it may mean that a contract will not go to the lowest bidder. These disadvantages would seem, however, to be the inevitable concomitants of having many businessmen in government.

But the necessary laws protect not only the public but also the government official. The businessman in government office must often be exposed to great pressures and temptations. By defining the areas in which he can properly act, these laws reduce the chance he will act in a way he knows to be legal and considers proper but which the public would consider immoral and self-serving. In the interest of the public and of government officials themselves, the "conflict of interest" law should be defined as sharply as possible.

NEXT WEEK

THE COMMONWEAL presents reports on the effects of the Hungarian uprising on the Communist Party in four key countries.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON (the United States): "It is now clear that there are people within the Communist Party who have made one extraordinarily significant break: they no longer simply accept the Moscow line."

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY (Great Britain): "The Polish case is held up now as an ideal." But the British Communists hold that "the road to socialism still lies along the strait and narrow way of Marxism, and those who believe in this way must still hang together."

ROBERT BARRAT (France): "Here is a unique historic opportunity to unfreeze the French Communist bloc."

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN (Italy): After the Party's December Congress, "the bulk of the opposition decided to remain inside the Party for the time being, firmly decided to 'reform it from within.'"

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Education and the State

"THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PROGRESS OF UNIVERSAL EDUCATION HAS COINCIDED WITH THE SECULARIZATION OF MODERN CULTURE"

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

IT SEEMS to me that most people are not sufficiently aware of the educational revolution of modern times or of the immense effect it has had on Western culture and Western religion. If one surveys the literature of modern education, one cannot help feeling dismayed at this great mass of material which represents an immense expenditure of time and labor out of all proportion to its intellectual content. Yet behind this smokescreen of books and journals great forces are at work which are changing the lives and thoughts of men more effectively than has the arbitrary power of dictators or the violence of political revolutions.

During the last hundred years mankind has been subjected to a process which makes for uniformity and universality. For example, there is universal military service, there is universal suffrage and finally there is universal education. We cannot say that any one of these has caused the others but they have all influenced one another and they are all presumably the expression of similar or identical forces operating in different fields.

Of the three examples I have given, universal suffrage is usually regarded as the most important. But it is less typical than the others because it is less compulsory. Indeed in the past the use of political suffrage has never been universal, even in societies in which every adult possessed the right to vote. Universal military service, on the other hand, has had less attention paid to it than it deserves. It is the earliest of the three and has its roots deepest in history. It is also the one in which the element of compulsion is strongest and most effective. In England, however, and still more in the United States, its introduction has been so long delayed that it is still regarded as an exceptional emergency measure and has not been fully assimilated by our society and culture.

There remains universal education, which is in fact the most universal of the three, since it has now extended all over the world. Moreover, it goes deeper than the other two, since it is directly concerned with the human mind and with the formation of character. It is, moreover, a continually expanding force, for when once the State has accepted full responsibility for the education of the whole youth of the nation, it is obliged to extend its control further and further into new fields: to the physical welfare of its pupils, to their feeding and medical care, to their amusements and the use of their spare time and, finally, to their moral welfare and their psychological guidance. Thus universal education involves the creation of an immense machinery of organization and control which must go on growing in power and influence until it covers the whole field of education and embraces every form of educational institution from the nursery school to the university.

Hence the modern movement towards universal education inevitably tends to become the rival or the alternative to the Church, which is also a universal institution and is also concerned directly with the human mind and with the formation of character. And in fact there is no doubt that the progress of universal education has coincided with the secularization of modern culture and has been very largely responsible for it.

IN THE philosophy of the Enlightenment which inspired the educational policy of the French Revolution and of Continental Liberalism, the Church and the influence of religion were regarded as powers of darkness that were responsible for the backward condition of the masses, and consequently the movement for universal education was a crusade of enlightenment which was inevitably anti-clerical in spirit. Even in England, as recently as 1870, Joseph Chamberlain could declare that "the object of the Liberal party in England, throughout the continent of Europe and in America has been to wrest the education of the young out of the hands of the priests to whatever denomination they might belong."

In practice, no doubt, universal education in England as in Germany and many other countries was the result either of a process of cooperation between Church and State or at least of some kind of *modus vivendi* between them. Nevertheless, it was at best an unequal

Mr. Dawson is the author of many studies of religion and culture. Sheed and Ward will shortly publish his *The Dynamics of World History*.

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partnership; the fact that secular education is universal and compulsory, while religious education is partial and voluntary inevitably favors the former and places the Church at a very great disadvantage in educational matters. This is not merely due to the disproportion in wealth and power of a religious minority as compared with the modern state. Even more important is the all-pervading influence of the secular standards and values which affects the whole educational system and makes the idea of an integrated religious culture seem antiquated and absurd to the politicians, the publicists and the technical experts who are the makers of public opinion.

Moreover, we must remember that modern secularism, in education as in politics, is not a purely negative force. Today, as in the days of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, it has its ideals and its dogmas—we may almost say that it has its own religion. One of the outstanding exponents of this secular idealism in recent times was the late John Dewey, whose ideas have had so great an influence on modern American education that they are still a living force in the educational world.

Now Dewey, in spite of his secularism, had a conception of education which was almost purely religious. Education is not concerned with intellectual values; its end is not to communicate knowledge or to train scholars in the liberal arts. It exists simply to serve Democracy; and Democracy is not a form of government, it is a spiritual community, based on "the participation of every human being in the formation of social values." Thus every child is a potential member of the democratic church, and it is the function of education to actualize his membership and to widen his powers of participation. No doubt knowledge is indispensable, but knowledge is always secondary to activity and activity is secondary to participation. The ultimate end of the whole process is a state of spiritual communion in which every individual shares in the experience of the whole and contributes according to his powers to the formation of "the final pooled intelligence," to use Dewey's expression, which is the communal mind.

It seems obvious to me that this concept of education is a religious one in spite of its secularism. It is inspired by a faith in democracy and a democratic "mystique" which is religious rather than political in spirit. Words like "community," "progress," "life," and "Youth," etc., but above all "democracy" itself, have acquired a kind of numinous character which gives them an emotional or evocative power and puts them above rational criticism.

But when it comes to the question of the real significance and content of education we cannot help asking what these sacred abstractions really amount to. Do not the most primitive and barbarous peoples known to us achieve these great ends of social participation and communal experience no less completely by their initiation ceremonies and tribal dances than does any modern educationalist with his elaborate programs for the integration of the school with life and the sharing of common experience? In fact, if it is true that there is an alliance between Mau Mau and the East African schools movement, the natives are only doing what the democratic educationalists demand.

THE FOREFATHER of modern education, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was more consistent than his descendants, would perhaps have approved this African experiment, since he believed that civilization was, on the whole, a mistake and that man would be better without it. But the modern democrat usually has rather a naive faith in modern civilization and he wishes to accept the inheritance of culture, while rejecting the painful process of social and intellectual discipline by which that inheritance has been acquired and transmitted.

In this the modern democrat differs from the Communist, who shares the same ideal of "participation" and the communalization of experience, but who has a very definite belief in the necessity of authority and social discipline and whose system of education is based not only upon a common doctrine but also upon a psychological technique for arousing faith and devotion.

The democrat, on the other hand, has no use for authority, in the State, in the school or in the sphere of cultural activity. But when it comes to the question of religious authority, the democrat and the Communist once more find themselves in agreement. As one of Dewey's advocates, Sidney Hook, has pointed out, the philosophy of Dewey, especially in education, is the enemy of "every doctrine which holds that man should tend to a supernatural end, in function of which he ought to organize his earthly life."

I have paid so much attention to Dewey's views because of the enormous influence he has had on American education and, through America, on educational ideas in the Far East and elsewhere. Moreover, I think his views are important because they state in a simplified and explicit form principles that have been taken for granted by liberal or democratic educationalists everywhere. The fact is that modern society was inevitably committed to something of the kind as soon as it abandoned the purely utilitarian conception of education which was characteristic of the English Radical reforms in the early 19th century. Henceforward universal education ceased to be considered as a means of communicating learning and became instead an instrument for creating a common mind. In this way universal education becomes the most important agent in the creation of the new secular religion of the State or the national community, which in democratic as

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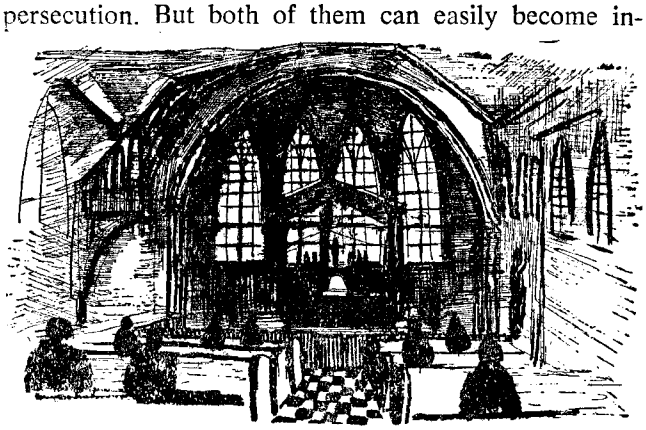
well as totalitarian societies is replacing the old religion of the Church as the working religion of the modern world.

I do not, of course, mean to suggest that the democratic educational ideal is the same as the totalitarian one. For as I have already said with regard to Communism, totalitarian education, like the rest of the totalitarian way of life, is far more authoritarian and is the instrument of an exclusive and intolerant party ideology. The democratic ideal of education is, as Dewey says, an education for freedom—for freedom of thought no less than for freedom of action—and he criticized the traditional forms of education because they retained the authoritarian principle, both in the relation of teacher to pupil and by the imposition of an absolute standard of culture which the uneducated are forced to accept and admire.

FOR THIS very reason the traditional forms of religious education are the worst of all, because they are the most authoritarian and go furthest in asserting the existence of absolute truths and absolute moral standards to which the individual must conform. In this respect, democratic educationalists like Dewey are at one with anti-Catholic propagandists like Mr. Blanshard. To the latter, it is precisely the Catholic attitude to public education which is the basis of his indictment. It is not that he objects to religion as such; for so long as religion is regarded as a private matter which only concerns the conscience and the feelings of the individual, it is a very good thing. But the moment that it attempts to create its own community of thought and to separate its adherents from the common mind of the democratic society and from the State school which is the organ of that common mind, it becomes an anti-social force which every good democrat must reject and condemn.

It is obvious that the whole question of the relations of education to State, Church, community and culture is inextricably involved with fundamental issues which cannot be avoided, however we may try to do so. Neither secularism nor Christianity necessarily involves persecution. But both of them can easily become intolerant, and whether tolerant or intolerant, they are inevitably and in every field irreconcilable with one another. On the one hand, we have the secular view that the State is the universal community and the Church is a limited association of groups of individuals for limited ends. On the other, there is the Christian view that the Church is the universal community and that the State is a limited association for certain limited ends. The philosopher and the theologian may say that both are perfect societies with their own rights and their proper autonomous spheres of action. But this is only true juridically speaking, not psychologically or morally. The Church is socially incomplete unless there is a Christian society as well as an ecclesiastical congregation, and the State is morally incomplete without some spiritual bond other than the law and the power of the sword.



Ever since the loss of a living contact with the historic faith of Christendom modern society has been seeking to find such a bond, either in the democratic ideal of the natural society and its general will, or in the nationalist cult of a historic racial community, or in the Communist faith in the revolutionary mission of the proletariat. And in each case what we find is a substitute religion or counter religion which transcends the juridical limits of the political State and creates a kind of secular Church. It is, of course, true that this development has been almost entirely a Continental one, which finds its characteristic expressions in French Revolutionary democracy, German nationalism and Russian Communism.

England and America, on the other hand, have always followed a different tradition, and their classical political doctrines in the past have been based on the older conception of a limited State which confined itself to certain specific activities and left the larger part of life as an open field for the free activity of individuals and independent organizations. Now in practice this Anglo-Saxon conception of the limited State was closely connected with a sectarian conception of the Church. Religion was active and influential but it was not united. The dominant issue was not Church and State, but Church and sect, or State, Church and sect, so that in England the formal secularization of the State was not due to an anti-clerical attack on religious beliefs, but was the work of pious Nonconformists who were concerned above all with the defense of their own religious liberties and privileges.

In England, therefore, and also in the United States, the victory of secular education has been due above all to interdenominational friction and jealousy, not to any conscious hostility to religion itself. But at the same time, the whole relation of State and community has been changing, owing to the growing responsibility of the State for social and individual welfare and its increasing control of economic life. The Continental

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conception of the State as an all-embracing community, a kind of secular church, has entered, as it were, by the back door, and has gradually and inevitably destroyed the traditional conception of the limited State and drastically reduced the sphere of action of non-political organizations in education and social life generally. In some respects we are now worse off than the Continental peoples, since there is no place in our traditions for the idea of a concordat as a kind of treaty between Church and State considered as two autonomous societies.

IN THE United States especially, the principle of the absolute separation of Church and State has been carried so far that it involves a refusal to recognize the Church as a corporate entity, so that anything of the nature of a concordat would be regarded as a violation of the Constitution. Similarly, in the domain of public education the principle of the separation of Church and State is now interpreted so rigorously as to ban any kind of positive religious teaching from the school, with the result that the educational system inevitably favors the pagan and secularist minority against the Christian and Jewish elements who represent a large majority of the population. This leads, on the one hand, to the propagation of that kind of substitute religion which I have already described as the established faith of the democratic State; and on the other hand, to the devaluation of traditional religion as unessential, non-vital, exceptional and perhaps even unsocial.

No doubt there are some American Protestants who are so convinced of the moral values of the democratic way of life that they tend to identify the democratic substitute religion with their own rather indefinite Christian tradition. One such Protestant educationalist, C. H. Moehlman, asserts that "to call public education 'godless' betrays invincible ignorance, infinite prejudice and complete misunderstanding of what religion is about," since "the public school is more distinctively a faith of all the people than the Church" itself.

I do not suppose that such utterances are representative of orthodox Protestant opinion. Certainly they would be rejected by every Catholic. Yet even Catholics are not immune from the pervasive influence of secularism in education. This influence shows itself in two opposite ways. In so far as Catholics preserve their own schools and universities by great efforts and sacrifices, they are forced to devote so much energy to the mere material or technical work of keeping the system going, that the quality of their teaching suffers. They become more concerned with the utilitarian need for practical results, as measured by the competitive standards set by the State or the secular educational system, than with the essential problem of the transmission of Catholic culture. And in the second place, the strength and pervasiveness of secular culture forces Christians, Catholic as well as Protestant, to accept the sectarian solution, which acquiesces in the secularization of culture and social life and strives in compensation to maintain a strict standard of religious observance inside the closed doors of the conventicle and the home.

The most remarkable example of this system, applied with rigid consistency over a period of many centuries, is to be seen in the life of the Jewish community in the ghettos of Central and Eastern Europe. But the ghetto was, after all, a solution imposed from without, and it would never have existed without a certain amount of active persecution and a very strong element of racial prejudice and national self-consciousness. Where these factors exist among Christians, as for example in the case of the Irish mass-immigration into Great Britain and the United States in the middle of the 19th century, we do get something like the formation of a Christian ghetto, where a minority inspired by an intense religious patriotism lives its own spiritual life under the surface of a dominant hostile culture.

But there is no longer any room for a ghetto in the modern secular State. Both its tolerance and its intolerance are hostile to the existence of any such closed world. Under modern conditions the sectarian solution merely means that the religious minority abdicates its claim to influence the culture of the community. And the attempt to use religious education in order to enforce a rigid standard of religious practice in the midst of a secular culture only results in increasing the problem of "leakage." And thus we get a situation in which the Catholics who both practice and understand their religion are the minority of a minority, and the majority of the population are neither fully Christian nor consciously atheist, but non-practicing Catholics, half-Christians and well-meaning people who are devoid of any positive religious knowledge at all.

HENCE IT seems to me that it is not enough to confine our efforts to the education of the Catholic minority. If we want to preserve Catholic education in a secularized society, we have got to do something about non-Catholic education also. The future of civilization depends on the fate of the majority, and, so long as nothing is done to counteract the present trend of modern education, the mind of the masses must become increasingly alienated from the whole tradition of Christian culture.

But this is not inevitable. It need never have happened if Christians had not been so absorbed in their internal conflicts that they adopted a negative defensive attitude towards the problem of national education as a whole. I believe very strongly that the time has come to consider the possibility of introducing the study of

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Christian culture as an objective historical reality into the curriculum of university studies.

Until a man acquires some knowledge of another culture, he cannot be said to be educated, since his whole outlook is so conditioned by his own social environment that he does not realize its limitations. He is a provincial in time, if not in place, and almost inevitably tends to accept the standards and values of his own society as absolute. The widening of the intellectual horizon by initiation into a different world of culture was indeed the most valuable part of the old classical education.

The study of Christian culture would, I believe, provide a really effective substitute. It would initiate the student into a world that was unknown or at best half-known, and at the same time it would deepen his knowledge of modern culture by showing its genetic relation to the culture of the past.

But how does this affect the question of Christian education? Obviously the academic study of Christian culture as an historical phenomenon is no substitute for religious education in the ordinary sense. What it might do, however, is help to remove the preliminary prejudice against the Christian view of things which plays so large a part in the secularization of culture. The fact is that the average educated person is not only ignorant of Christian theology; he is no less ignorant of Christian philosophy, Christian history and Christian literature, and, in short, of Christian culture in general. He is not ashamed of his ignorance, because Christianity has come to be one of the things that educated people don't talk about.

This, I think, is quite a recent prejudice which arose among the half-educated and gradually spread both upwards and downwards. It did not exist among civilized people in the 19th century, whatever their personal beliefs were. Men like Lord Melbourne and Macaulay could talk as intelligently about religious subjects as could Gladstone and Acton. It was only at the very end of the century that Christianity ceased to be intellectually respectable, and this was due not only to the secularization of culture but also to the general lowering of cultural standards that characterized the age.

Today there are signs of an improvement in this respect. Religion has come back into poetry and fiction, and there is once more a civilized interest in religious discussion. But this cannot go far unless religion is brought back into higher education, and this can only be achieved by giving the systematic study of Christian culture a recognized place in university studies.

A reform of this kind on the level of higher studies would inevitably penetrate the lower levels of secondary and primary teaching and by degrees affect the whole tone of public education. It is obviously difficult to improve the situation in the schools, if the teachers have no knowledge of Christian culture and if the standard set by the university is a secular one. However, it is for the universities and the other centers of higher education to take the first step; and if they did so, there is little doubt that they would find plenty of support elsewhere, and that their initiation of Christian culture study into the curriculum would be most fruitful in results.

FREEDOM IN THE UNIVERSITY

Assault from Within

LAWRENCE PODELL

ACADEMIC FREEDOM is defined in Webster's New International Dictionary as "Freedom of a teacher, especially a college or university professor, to express truth as he sees it; immunity of a teacher or professor from loss of position because of expression of individual opinions." The arguments to support academic freedom are identical with those used to support freedom of thought and expression generally, with added emphasis upon one factor: since it is the academician's job to create and communicate ideas, provision for his occupational security is necessary in order that he be free to discharge his occupational responsibility effectively. Assuming that the consequences of maximum freedom to inquire after and express knowledge are beneficial, we must recognize that these consequences will result only if the responsibility for inquiry and expression are maximized also.

The threats to academic freedom as a special case of freedom of thought and expression have been covered, on all levels, quite adequately. But what of the threat to academic freedom that arises from a de-

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cline in academic responsibility, that is, a decline in the obligation to seek and express knowledge on the part of those employed to do so. To be sure, this is a less obvious threat, but possibly a more effective one in the long run, turning the question of academic freedom into pretty much of an "academic question." Too many of those who are academically employed have a diminishing vested interest in academic freedom.

To begin with, much of what we call higher learning in America is non-academic in nature. Our idea of the university includes institutes, schools with vocational emphasis. In addition to the traditional professional schools, like law, medicine and theology, we have incorporated high-level trade schools into the university, in which professors of road building, homemaking and retail window display are on a faculty with scholars of the classics, sciences and philosophy. Without evaluating relative importance, it seems obvious that the interests of the faculties of hotel administration, engineering, pharmacy, agriculture, business and teacher's colleges are quite different from those of the liberal arts and science colleges with regard to academic freedom. The inquiry, communication and controversy within the vocational institutes are technical, not academic, in nature. For example, to an increasing extent, faculties of teacher's colleges debate methods of presentation, not validity of content.

Even within the liberal arts and science colleges, many on the faculty are devoted to non-academic duties. The American university performs many functions today—training officers for the military establishment, supervising the premarital activities and employment futures of its students and entertaining the population at large by staging seasonal sports spectacles. To accomplish these ends, professorships in military science, student guidance and varsity coaching are established. Again, without evaluating relative worth, it is questionable whether these non-academic professors have a vested interest in the freedom to profess.

EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT is the fact that even within the liberal arts and science departments themselves, at least four influences mitigate against fulfilling academic responsibility. There is, first, the fact that increasing specialization within all fields has tended to lessen scholarly communication. Questions are framed within narrow bounds, and colleagues, due to lacks of specialized knowledge, refrain from discussion. Furthermore, increased specialization of knowledge is turning scholars into technicians. While the very large universities provide research institutes in which technicians can be employed, most institutions provide professorial positions for technicians, as well as scholars, and the increased years of training needed to produce competent specialists have turned many departments into small vocational institutes, training undergraduates for graduate study.

Secondly, it must be recognized that the "how-to-do-it" or "what-can-I-do-with-it" emphases, best exemplified by the technical institutes, have permeated the liberal arts and science colleges. Courses are redesigned with a vocational or pre-professional objective; other courses are altered in an attempt to provide "enough" literature for scientists and "enough" science for the otherwise literate. Academic subject matter, be it mathematics, languages, literature or science, is not viewed as learning, but as a necessary employment asset by some and by others as merely a requirement for the degree (which, in itself, may be viewed solely as an employment asset).

Thirdly, an influence which may be called "education for life" (as if students of other years were not really living or as if learning was not a part of living) has invaded the liberal arts and science campus. Stemming from the tendencies to segmentalized and seemingly utilitarian learning, and aided by the view of college attendance as a necessary evil in the process of social mobility, the proposal is that the college gratify student needs. These needs are sometimes imagined, usually conditions of adolescence and perhaps largely unserviceable, at that. The theory is that these needs should be serviced not only by extra-curricular activities but through the course offerings as well.

The goal is to make adjustment to life, people and problems less difficult—X number of credits equaling an easier life. Not only is the achievement of such an objective highly improbable, but the teaching of adjustment as a goal of life may be quite antithetical to the defense of the freedoms to seek and express truth. Exercise of these freedoms may entail the refusal to adjust to others and may create problems which make life somewhat more difficult but perhaps more worth living.

THERE IS, lastly, the fact that efficient business management is desirable in a university only if it provides more effective means of realizing academic goals. However, business management has often affected the goals of academic life. In the polite scramble for revenue from the G.I. Bill, many institutions increased their physical plant and staff. To maintain this expansion, enrollments had to be kept high, which meant a decline in standards. The product had to be made more attractive to the consumer: courses were retitled to provide a "draw," they were "watered down," grades were "liberalized," requirements lessened and "education for life" electives increased.

One of the newer breed of department chairmen

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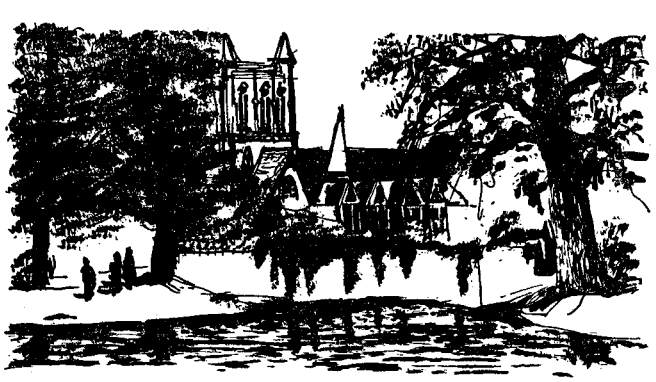
proudly claimed, "Our department's costs are $12 per credit, physics' costs are $18 per credit and tuition is $15 per credit—why, we're supporting the physics department." Needless to say, his efficient operations did not come about by increasing the academic worth of his department. Courses were devised, men hired and practices inaugurated to increase demand. After all, spaces were available for only twenty students in the physics laboratory, with its expensive equipment, but one hundred and fifty students would register for a course in "dating" taught by a low-paid instructor with a fresh M.A.. Departments must attract and hold their majors (students majoring in a field make up a dependable core of buyers) or the students will flee to other departments or to the vocational institutes just across the campus green. Physics departments will remain strong for other reasons, but will classical languages survive the scarcity of demand?

It is ironic that students, who do not possess the knowledge (that is, after all, why they are in college), should be the arbiters of what knowledge is to be offered in the curriculum. But, student registration is a major criterion for the inclusion and exclusion of courses. As the university hires faculty members whose interests coincide with course offerings, the students also influence what knowledge is to be pursued by scholars and, hence, what knowledge is to be gained in our generation. The future will be shaped by knowledge gained today; in more ways than we think, the future is in the hands of the youth—in this case, they shape it while still in their adolescence.

What constitutes good administration of a university? Intellectual progress by the faculty is too intangible to be measured. However, growth in numbers is measurable. Growth, be it in customers or students, is good business. It is attained by mass production, and the good administrator, possibly recruited from business or government, finds increasing class size from 50 to 100 to 150 or even 200 students efficient. The professor's salary is the same whether he teaches in a small seminar room or a huge lecture hall.

If the students complain about the lack of personal



contact, a few $1,500 a year fellowships or internships can be set up, usually with foundation money, to provide personnel to lead discussion groups. Students seem to be more interested in the non-academic part of college life, anyway; the good administrator spends much of his valuable time with athletic, fraternity and chaperonage problems, leaving academic problems in the hands of a myriad of faculty committees, largely devoid of power because, in the last analysis, important decisions are most often a matter of budgetary allocation.

To all too many administrators, the faculty is sought from what they consider a labor market. Here the educational administrator has the advantage over the businessman on at least two grounds: first, there is no national union to complicate matters, though there are associations which can exert some moral force, if he has a conscience; second, his customers are much less choosy than the businessman's—how can students effectively evaluate scholarly competence and, besides, who says they want it? Supply and demand can take their course in the market for scholarly labor. Three instructors come cheaper than one full professor, especially if they are given professorial rank. The engineering faculty, for whom the administrator must competitively bid against large industry, are more highly paid and ranked than, let us say, the English or foreign language faculty, who are, as one dean said, "A dime a dozen."

In general, the institute faculties are more highly paid than their scholarly colleagues because the very nature of their competence makes them quite useful to industry. But even within the liberal arts and science colleges the same situation holds true. At one university, salaries in the economics department ranged between one and two thousand dollars higher than those in other social science departments. Economists can work for private industry; historians have a much more limited utility.

THESE FOUR influences have had profound effects upon academic responsibility. The small group of learned colleagues that once made up the university is no more. Modern enrollments, expenses and objectives have made bureaucracy the characteristic organization of modern universities, administered by professional executives acting in accordance with the desires of political, industrial, alumni and student bodies. It is rare that administrators or the sources of administrative power limit academic freedom by some dramatic dismissal of a professor. Often, less noticed but more effective limitations are accomplished through the altering of employment practices, standards, budgets, salaries and curricula—limiting academic freedom by limiting academic responsibility. An administrator

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may not refuse to incorporate a sequence of teacher training courses if the legislature sees the need for it, disproportionately develop carbon electives within the chemistry department if a local industry promises a grant, or build a huge athletic organization if the alumni desire it.

It is by these and similar measures, some highly necessary, some highly commendable, that academic responsibility is lessened. Meanwhile, the small group of colleagues has become a large number of employees. The new academic world is their world and they have adjusted to it, for it is their livelihood. They may rise up at a dramatic abridgement of academic freedom, but they are participants in the loss of academic responsibility. Increasingly, theirs is the life of the salaried employee more than that of the curious, disciplined scholar.

But with all of this, the search for fundamental knowledge is continued by some members of the faculty. In the physical and biological sciences, this search has been accepted as necessary for the obvious utilitarian results that have emanated from it. Perhaps even the quest for and communication of physical and biological truth is viewed as good in itself; the Galileo and Scopes trials are things of the forgotten past.

However, for the humanities and especially for the social sciences, the situation is such that the pressure to justify their existence, to insure their place in the list of course offerings, may mean an even greater emphasis upon the seemingly utilitarian vocational and "education for life" materials. These emphases may mean a decline in scholarly pursuits and the eventual distraction of superior personnel from the university to other occupations. If the gratifications of scholarship and scholarly companionship are not available to our keenest minds, they might as well make some money.

In the social sciences, particularly, wherein present needs cannot be satisfied by existing knowledge, academic freedom, if combined with inferior personnel, may become academic license—the professorial status allowing one to cast pronouncements about one-gulp remedies to social problems, be they a matter of marriages, businesses, or nations. The statements deriving from such sources are usually so absurd as to be devoid of threat, outside the realm of controversy, and liable to incur little sanction. The nature of academic freedom entails the responsibility to create and communicate ideas which may be threatening and controversial. Of course, the occupational-security provisions of academic freedom protect the irresponsible as well as the responsible. We encourage the development of academic license by protecting academic freedom without encouraging academic responsibility.

In the social sciences, for example, will we continue to produce American scholars of the caliber, say, of Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey and Morris R. Cohen? We must do at least that and more if these sciences are to advance and afford the knowledge that is so desperately needed. If we fail in this effort, will it be because academic freedom has been limited by overt ideological restriction upon thought and expression? Or will the cause be the subtle, covert influences which are resulting in a decline in academic responsibility in America?

IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Teacher Shortage

JOSEPH H. FICHTER

EVERY FIRST GRADE in every elementary school has given the community at least six years notice when it would be ready to enter school. This news flash from the baby crib has been heeded by some communities and neglected by many others. The result is that the over-crowding of schools and the shortage of teachers constitute an almost universal problem in American cities. Meeting the problem has required more than a mere awareness of its presence. It has meant planning and building of schools, recruiting, training and hiring of teachers.

In a sociological study of the elementary school system, which we are now making, we have interviewed the parents of more than seven hundred and fifty school children. One of the questions we ask them is: "What can be done about the teacher shortage?" We put the same question to almost fifty teachers in the elementary schools, both public and parochial. We wanted to know what suggestions parents and teachers could make about providing more personnel in

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the elementary school room. About one-sixth of the parents had never thought of the problem, but all of the teachers had something to say about it.

The solution most frequently suggested by parents is an economic one. They seem to feel that the teaching profession is grossly underpaid and that more personnel would be attracted if the salaries were increased. They have deep sympathy for teachers who have to "get along for twelve months on a ten-month salary." Some suggest that arrangements should be made by local business and industry to employ these teachers during the summer months. The most frequent statement made by parents is: "The only way to get more teachers is to pay them more money." Some are even willing to contribute more taxes and tuition for this purpose.

The teachers themselves were less money-minded. An unexpected response to our interviews was that no teacher suggested a pay hike as a most important incentive for meeting the shortage. One male teacher with five children of school age said that his salary compares favorably with the average income of other employed people in this mid-western industrial city. In this particular locality, at least, teachers seem to be satisfied with their pay. They are also more or less satisfied with their job conditions and feel that the most important need is to "sell teaching" as a profession and an occupation.

This suggestion seems to tie in with the results of another aspect of our study. We had asked children in the eighth, seventh and sixth grades to write down what they wanted to be when they finished their education. Approximately one-third of the girls in these three grades indicated that they wanted to be nurses. Being an airline stewardess, or even a sales clerk, stenographer, or secretary, was more attractive to these school girls than being a teacher. Certain female occupations seem to have been "glamorized" on television, radio, movies, and even in deliberate advertising. In a recent article in *Atlantic* Oscar Handlin pointed out that *Our Miss Brooks* and *Mr. Peepers* have not been presented in such wise as to make the teaching profession attractive.

IT IS A sociological axiom that status does just not happen automatically and that the prestige attached to an occupation can be artificially increased. All kinds of jobs have been made more attractive simply by renaming them and by spot-lighting them. The humble function of airline stewardess has been glamorized with uniforms, training periods, and advertising gimmicks hinting at romantic and exotic experiences. Chiropractors and social workers have struggled for years to raise their jobs to the status of professions by raising qualifications and standards.

Similar attempts of the teaching profession to raise its own status have in some instances boomeranged. City and State boards of education have multiplied the technical requirements for teachers' certificates. Schools of education have driven prospective teachers away by their insistence upon formal, but often content-less pedagogical courses.

Among the mothers we interviewed there were some who said they had entered college with the intention of studying to be a teacher. They quit after a year or two, or switched to another degree program, because of the type of demands made for a teacher's degree. This aspect of teacher-preparation was reflected in the opinions of many parents and teachers. It was a wide-spread opinion among them that every community contains an untapped resource of well-educated people who could do an excellent job in the elementary classroom. They knew certain individuals, especially women, who have bachelor's degrees from a liberal arts college but who are disqualified from teaching because of the technical requirements imposed by educationists.

The role of the Sisters in the parochial schools came in for numerous comments at this point. Many of the parents believe that the very nature of the religious life provides the basic ingredient for good teaching. Knowledge and experience, love and education, exhibited by the Sisters in the classroom, are to the parental mind the most important kind of equipment a teacher can have. Added to this, these Sisters do enjoy the benefits accruing from technical pedagogical theories and practices. The woman who is a good religious, without being a good teacher, is most likely to be removed by her superioress to another position.

Some of the parents suggested that the shortage could be relieved if we employed teacher's aides just as we had employed nurse's aides during the war. The Parent-Teachers Association in one parochial school already has this scheme underway. The mothers come at the noon-time recess to supervise the children on the playground and on the return to the school rooms. They assist in distributing paper, pencils and other supplies, and in checking the simple written work like spelling and arithmetic. With this kind of help the teacher can easily handle as many as fifty children in the same classroom.

Getting former teachers to return to the classroom after their children have reached a certain age, inducing educated women without teachers' certificates to take up teaching, and developing a program of teacher's aides, may meet the immediate crisis and give at least temporary relief. The teacher shortage, however, appears to be a long-term problem. It cannot be solved with merely stop-gap measures.

The basic source of the future teaching profession is in the school itself. A large proportion of the

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children who are now learning must somehow be persuaded to become teachers themselves. This is difficult for two reasons. *First,* because they come from economic-minded families in an economic-dominated society. They are impressed with the idea that income is the measure of success and that teachers' incomes are low. *Secondly,* the child is with the teacher five or six hours a day and this realistic relationship cannot compete with the glamor of more distant and less well-known forms of occupation.

Still there are suggested ways in which the child can come to appreciate the value of the teaching profession. Children always love to play adult roles. In some schools the older children are given an opportunity to perform some of the tasks of teaching. They are appointed to help particular children in the lower grades during the study period. They supervise the younger children, as patrol boys and patrol girls within the building and between classes, as well as on the sidewalks and streets after school hours. In a sense this is a kind of miniature apprenticeship. Just as the child learns the elements of home-making by being allowed to help around the house, so also can he or she develop an interest in teaching by performing personally some of the minor tasks of the teaching role.

To some extent the teachers themselves may be charged with neglect in failing to recruit future members of the profession. Their contacts with the children are close, personal and extended. Many of these children feel that they have to be at the top of their class or have to "know everything" before they could even begin to think of being a teacher. Talking to children, especially to likely individuals, about the importance of teaching and the rewards of dedication to the profession, helps to inspire and attract them. Thus, recruitment starts at the elementary level even while certain aspects of the apprenticeship are being used.

One of the teachers interviewed pointed out that there is a certain wastage of the actual teacher talent which is now available. In every city relatively large numbers of teachers are drawn from the school room to do administrative work which could be as easily done by social workers or other trained personnel. This "proliferation of bureaucracy" is found not only on the college and high school level but extends down even into the elementary school. The question is not whether these administrative positions and "paper jobs" are necessary but whether well-qualified teachers should be taken out of the classroom to perform them. It is an interesting fact that the ordinary parochial school by sheer necessity cannot indulge in this apparent luxury of extra administrative functions.

Another teacher suggested that the working day be curtailed by one hour. This could be done by eliminating the study period or by having parents come in to supervise the study period (since this has practically taken the place of "home work" which parents used to supervise in the home). This suggestion is not acceptable to most parents, especially to those parents whose children attend the parochial school which starts with Holy Mass at eight o'clock in the morning. Thus, the Sisters' "working day" has this extra hour in the morning as well as the usual period for supervised study during the day.

There was a vague notion among some of the parents that the teacher shortage could be solved by a kind of "G. I. Plan" which would subsidize future teachers through college. Certain voluntary organizations already do this; for example, the Red Cross provides scholarships for future social workers on the agreement that they would work for the organization for a certain period of time. Whether the city, county, state or federal government can develop a workable teachers' program along these lines is still open to question.

THE TEACHER shortage is demonstrated, and perhaps even accentuated, by the fact that most teachers in elementary schools are overworked. This is seen not only in the crowded classes, but also by the large amount of peripheral tasks they have to perform. One woman said, "We ought to let the teachers teach and the parents parent." She meant that the school has absorbed many functions which belong in other hands. Her list of such functions included the following: instruction in health, safety and athletics; supervising recesses, study and lunch periods; taking care of behavior problems; performing extra paper work and serving on Scout committees.

The teachers in the parochial schools must also perform many of these peripheral tasks. The fact is that in this Midwestern city the parochial schools are in many ways similar to the public schools in their problems. All of them have hired lay teachers to help solve the shortage. Some have discontinued the kindergarten and would like to discontinue the first grade so that Catholic children would start only in the second grade when it is time for them to prepare for first Holy Communion. A step of this kind multiplies the problem for the public elementary schools and increases the teacher shortage in that area of schooling.

In the last analysis, the major question still remains: "How can we attract more people to the elementary teaching profession?" Much of what has been said above may be helpful in the solution, and most of it applies to both public and parochial schools. It may well be that an improvement in the status of teachers and an increase in the vocation for teaching would imply also an increase of vocations to the religious life.

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM

IN HIS BOOK *Heresy Yes, Conspiracy No,* Sidney Hook states flatly that there is no academic freedom in Catholic colleges. Professor Hook's opinion, echoed in Robert MacIver's study *Academic Freedom,* is almost a truism in influential American intellectual circles. But the most persuasive, reasoned and reasonable defense of academic freedom I have yet seen appears in the 1956 *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (published by the Catholic University in Washington). It was written by Journet Kahn, a Notre Dame philosopher whose authorities are such supposed mossbacks as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman.

Kahn takes as his theme a quotation from Cardinal Newman: "I say, then, that it is a matter of primary importance in the cultivation of those sciences, in which truth is discoverable by the human intellect, that the investigator should be free, independent, unshackled in his movements; that he should be allowed and enabled, without impediment, to fix his mind intently, nay exclusively, on his special object, without the risk of being distracted every other minute in the process and progress of his enquiry, by charges of temerariousness, or by warnings against extravagance or scandal."

In an age of creeping conformism, Congressional investigations, special loyalty oaths and watchdog citizens groups, the distractions are many and the temptations to give in to pressure are fierce. But Kahn, speaking out of the Catholic tradition, urges the university to hold fast to the Newman standard. In doing so, he does not confine himself to the safe generality but touches on some very ticklish matters.

For instance, the question of a professor's holding unpopular or "unorthodox" views in the field of economics, history and philosophy. What is to be said when society at large, or the responsible leaders of society, believe that existing forms of government and economic life are dependent on classroom support for the established patterns? In most cases the university administrators themselves are not sympathetic to the views of their problem professors, nor is the Board.

Professor Kahn argues that it makes no difference whether pressures stem from economic interests, the fear of Congressional investigations, public demand for loyalty oaths or the sheer force of popular opinion. The university's obligation is clear; it must put loyalty to itself and its own mission above any extraneous claims. The conscientious university executive considering such pressures, however appealing they may be to him personally, will realize that they represent "the attempt of an extra-academic body, in the interests of moral utility, to specify the very objects related to the search for truth." He will, in short, resist them.

Academic freedom Kahn defines as "the right to teach and learn in an institution dedicated to the discovery and dissemination of truth regardless of its acceptability to special interests." He adds: "If the sincere believer in democracy and capitalism on the board of trustees cannot conscionably agree to employment by the university of a professionally competent socialist, then the trustee has no choice but to hand in his resignation. He is no longer concerned with university education."

This man from Notre Dame does not even avoid the sizzling question of Communists on the faculty. (I presume that he is speaking not of the Catholic college but of the uncommitted secular university.) What is to be done when it is learned that a Communist holds a university teaching position? A decade ago, most people would have said nothing, as long as the professor's competence was fairly established. Senator Taft, trustee of Yale, took this position, for instance. Today it is a rare university that is willing to keep a known Communist on its staff.

Kahn holds that the presence of a Communist on a faculty "offers no special problem other than directing our attention towards a re-examination of his professional integrity, with the possibility of a favorable judgment by no means excluded."

Here Professor Kahn, while agreeing wholeheartedly that Communism is conspiratorial, challenges Sidney Hook's conclusion that membership in the Party disqualifies every Communist for academic responsibility. "Consistency has never been a characteristic of human nature," Kahn writes, "and to argue, as does Mr. Hook, from the universal—the clearly stated academic aims of international Communism—to either the guilt or unreliability of every American party member in academic life, is to conceive of ethical science as involving no more than the subalternation of particulars to universals. Such a device saves a good deal of time and effort, but when justice is at stake, it is well to be equipped with something more than formal logic."

The Kahn paper concludes with a study of academic freedom on the Catholic campus. Too often, he says, Catholic colleges still operate under the mistaken idea that the goal of higher education is the development of religious piety. But, for all that, there is reason to believe that academic freedom can best flourish in a framework of a "unified religious and philosophical view." For, he concludes, "the liberating power of certitude is the foundation of academic freedom."

JOHN COGLEY.

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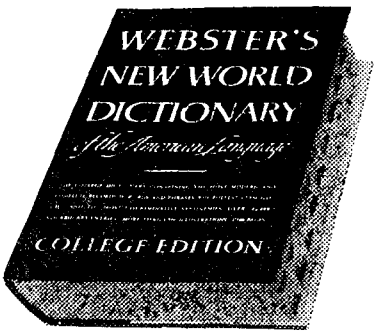

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THE SCREEN

IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

ALTHOUGH truth *is* often stranger than fiction, it doesn't necessarily make a better movie. "The Wrong Man" is based on a true story, on events that happened to a New Yorker who was accused and jailed for a series of robberies he did not commit. Maxwell Anderson and Angus MacPhail have worked these dire happenings into a sincerely accurate screenplay; and Alfred Hitchcock has directed his large and good cast with utmost realism. The results are painful and embarrassing to watch, and, as the piece runs on at too great length, somewhat dull.

Henry Fonda portrays the New Yorker, a Stork Club bass viol player identified by the victims as the criminal who held up their stores and office, as if he were a stunned man walking in a dream. And full well he might: so much happens to the poor guy that the whole film, in spite of its realism, takes on a nightmarish it-can't-happen-here quality. Not only is this meek man booked for robberies about which he knows nothing, but he is also overwhelmed with troubles at home. His wife (Vera Miles) has a nervous breakdown and is confined to a sanitarium. Furthermore, after his lawyer (Anthony Quale) advises him to gather a few people who might establish his whereabouts on the nights of the robberies, the accused man discovers most of the key witnesses are dead. If this were fiction, one would say that the scriptwriters had stacked the cards against our harassed hero. That the story is true (or almost—allowing for a few changes and omissions) doesn't make the movie any easier to take. Even with the truth, Director Hitchcock taxes our credulity and endurance.

THE AUDIENCE is made to suffer in "Edge of the City" too, but most of the film is overflowing with warmth and good will that more than compensate for the violence and meanness. Its central character is a neurotic deserter from the Army who has been at odds with stern authority ever since his father wrongly and cruelly blamed him for the death of his brother in an auto accident. He gets a job in the train yards along the New York docks, and, although he soon realizes his immediate boss is a chiseling bully who goads him just as his father and Army sergeant goaded him, life begins to look up for him when he is befriended by a Negro who is the boss of another gang.

Director Martin Ritt, who handles his cast well, is at his best in the scenes developing the growing friendship between the two young men and then expanding it with understanding and mutual admiration as time

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passes. These two lead roles are excellently played by John Cassavetes, as the sour misfit so badly in need of guidance and love, and Sidney Poitier, as the Negro whose goodness and exuberant enthusiasm for life are so great that he can convey them to his friend. These two are well supported by Jack Warden as the mean, vicious boss, Ruby Dee as Poitier's wife, Kathleen Maguire as their white friend in whom they hope Cassavetes will develop an interest, and others as co-workers, relatives and friends.

"Edge of the City" was realistically and handsomely photographed in New York City. I found its inevitable fight scenes (with fists and grapple hooks in the train yards) a little too violent and realistic, but the other episodes are compelling. The script, which Robert Alan Aurthur wrote from his TV play, "A Man Is Ten Feet Tall," may remind audiences of other films about workers and rebels, but it is very well written.

BY FAR THE most cynical of this week's three new films is "The Great Man," and as a movie it is the most static and talky—but it is also the most fascinating—fascinating in the way Erich von Stroheim was in his own silent films as "the man you love to hate." In this case, however, the great man, himself, never appears. He has just died. And José Ferrer, portraying a radio commentator, is assigned to do a memorial program on the late and much-loved radio humorist. Bit by bit, Ferrer gathers his material and in no time discovers that this popular American was the lowest kind of heel—in fact, the heel to end all heels. And it soon becomes obvious that there are many dubious characters in the broadcasting business —people so anxious to further their own cause that they don't care whom they step on as they mount their own ladder of success.

At times "The Great Man" may remind audiences of "Citizen Kane," which also delighted in exposing a popular American; but in the new film no attempt is made to explain how the great man got to be such a despicable person, nor are there any flashbacks. The unpretty facts are revealed by the various people who knew and worked with the great man: the network president (Dean Jagger), the station manager who has practically sunk to the great man's level (Keenan Wynn), a secretary (Joanne Gilbert), a press agent (Jim Backus), a singer and former mistress who is now alcoholic (Julie London) and others, all of whose stories add up to an unpleasant whole. But most revealing is the tale told by the fuddy-duddy old man who first gave the great man his start. This role is played by Ed Wynn in a short but brilliant portrayal, one of the many good performances in the picture. José Ferrer, who plays the lead, wrote the script with Al Morgan from the latter's novel, also directed this movie, which may not

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THE STAGE

VALEDICTORY

MR. ROBERT Sherwood's posthumous comedy, mounted by The Playwrights' Company in a production of considerable opulence, is a pallid conceit provoked by the legend of Mrs. Robert Murray's detention of General Sir William Howe during the American War of Independence. In the decorous, pleasing parlor Mr. Boris Aronson has designed as the theater of "Small War on Murray Hill," Mr. Sherwood's Mrs. Murray, a lady of putative wit, and Mr. Sherwood's General Howe, a gentleman of stratagems amorous and military, spar prettily through an evening of ambiguous dalliance while the fox, Washington, craftily tweaks the British lion's tail. Mr. Sherwood is too much the sophisticated commentator to ask, in his relentlessly Latinate prose, Did She or Didn't She; rather, he coyly suggests, *why* did she?

The question, and Mrs. Murray, may have detained General Howe; they need not comparably trouble us. This is not a judgment made in arrogance or harsh satisfaction: there is no pleasure in speaking ill of the distinguished dead, and the private Mr. Sherwood inhabited with ease a climate of humane instinct, public devotion and generosity of mind. His stature as dramatist seems to me much less secure. I feel sadly certain the claim of his work to future attention will be meager and rudimentary, in terms of period oddity only: fossilized remains of liberal sentiments and anxieties in a moldy decade. In his middle range, Mr. Sherwood is sincere, didactic and hortatory; he liked, in Mr. Brooks Atkinson's deadly phrase meant as tribute, "to mull things over." His rusty fables of violence and freedom are corrupted by the idea of thought, as his sexual comedies, tinseled and vacuous, are corrupted by the idea of elegance. The two counterfeits blend with fatal nullity in this valedictory exhibition, but however knowing and adroit the hand which mixes, no one is deceived.

Mr. Sherwood's plays have presumably given pleasure, in performance if not in quality. "Small War on Murray Hill" might honorably have done so again, had not Mr. Garson Kanin, that engineer of pile-driving farce, launched its well-bred indelicacies and fatigued national humors with such obnoxious energy. Mr. Kanin simply will not trust to the unconditioned re-

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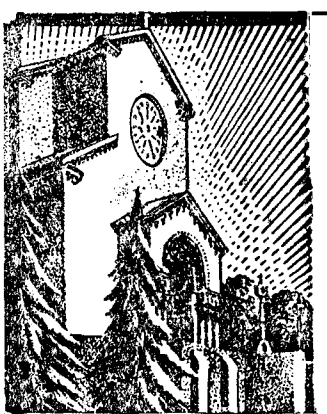

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sponse: see! he cries with unnerving glee—this is funny! and this! and this! One soothes the roiling child, so desperate to please: Yes, Garson, anything you say, anything. Miss Jan Sterling and Mr. Leo Genn seem, unhappily, to have been infected with this winking frenzy. Miss Sterling is a lovely woman who doubtless wears her bosom at the angle correctly decreed by fashion for the Revolutionary War. Mr. Genn is one of nature's noblemen, and handsome, with fine romantic presence, and a history of much distinction in his profession. But as Miss Hermione Gingold lethally observed on a similar occasion, the Admiralty itself couldn't be more arch than Mr. Genn and Miss Sterling when they get going with the coffee cups. Mr. Daniel Massey scores neatly in his American debut, and the pastoral backdrop of a bosky Manhattan landscape prettily invites the attention when it fails, rather too often, to find engagement elsewhere. (*At the Ethel Barrymore.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

ANGELA THIRKELL

Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

To the Editors. Oh *dear!* Miss Dachine Rainer is a Very Clever young woman, and No One could admire her work for The Commonweal more than I; still, one cannot help feeling that she strayed into Quite the Wrong tea party in her review of Angela Thirkell's *Never Too Late* (January 4). Of course, as she says that she feels she did, too, one cannot possibly Take Offense, but it is all so Regrettable nonetheless. Out here in the middle west there are Thirkellites quite as there are Janeites, very often the Same People, and one suspects that Mrs. Thirkell owes this success to the fact that her books contain a Society so very like our own. The whole point is that such a Society, where one's Children marry one's Friends' Children and eventually everyone is related to everyone else, takes a great deal of Knowing to appreciate. Scarcely Anyone, even very intelligent guests like Miss Rainer, can be expected to take us all down on First Acquaintance, and I'm sure some of the Lords who giggle must Grate on one who does not know and love their Deeper Qualities, and nearly everyone must look like "dreadfully Dull people, Don't you know?" One must exercise charity and remember what she says, that it is her First Visit; still, there is More here than meets her appraising Eye, and something should be said of the County Virtues of good breeding, humor, sportsmanship, and Stoutness of Heart. I do hope that when Miss Rainer reads more Thirkell and discovers that she and Mrs. Morland Do have more

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than their Sex in common, she will not put something toxic in her tea at all, but will decide that Things can be really very pleasant, and will settle down to another slice of Aunt Leslie's perfectly delicious plum Goody.

JEAN HOLZHAUER.

"VOICES OF LIBERTY"

Brussels, Belgium.

To the Editors: I have just received the December 21 issue with the magnificent article by Leslie C. Stevens and the notice that he had passed on to his eternal reward.

Leslie Stevens was a rugged democrat—a man who believed in the whole being of man, his dignity, his God-given right to be a man in the fullest sense. He hated Soviet tyranny just as he hated any other sham.

I was particularly struck by his remark—so typical of such an acutely sensitive and spiritual man!—that Radio Liberation recognized the fact that many people under Communist domination are religious, and that Radio Liberation, therefore, carried appropriate religious programs.

His remark is all the more striking for, as a young Jesuit scholastic who escaped from imprisonment in Hungary during the uprising has written in *America*, Radio Free Europe broadcasts were notable for their lack of recognition that human beings have souls and spiritual needs.

This last article written by Leslie Stevens deserves all the more careful consideration particularly on this point. For if the friends of captive people would help them, they must deal with those persons as complete, integral persons. Catering to the fantastic prejudices of anti-clerical European socialists has never, in my mind, constituted an honest approach to the problems of atheistic communism.

God bless Leslie Stevens. His last article was perhaps his best.

RICHARD L. DEVERALL.

IDENTIFYING REVIEWERS

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: As a long-time subscriber and a passionate admirer of your magazine, it seemed a good idea to start the New Year by calling attention to a facet of your personality that has been a recurring frustration these many years: your descriptions of your book reviewers.

For instance, take "Thomas F. Curley is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal." What does this mean? A reader knows approximately what he knew before he read your description. "Michael Harrington writes for various American journals." Many of us know Mr. Harrington, but to those who don't what does that sentence mean? Who? What? When? Where? "William Dunlea is a free-lance writer living in New York City?" How does that distinguish him from two million other people? "Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal." What does that tell us? . . . I think you would be performing a distinct service to your readers if you would be explicit in describing the qualifications and backgrounds of all your reviewers.

JEANNE BARRY.

The Editors—Edward S. Skillin, who lives in a New Jersey community not far from New York; James O'Gara, who contributes regularly to The Commonweal; James Finn, who lives in Manhattan; and Philip Scharper, who writes for various American journals—promise to try to mend their ways in the New Year.

BOOKS

A Great Dramatist's Approach to Autobiography

MIRROR IN MY HOUSE: The Autobiographies of Sean O'Casey. Macmillan. 2 Vols. $20.

By DAVID H. GREENE

MOST OF us already know that the Irish excel in writing the kind of short story which is lyric rather than dramatic and owes more to continental than to native sources. But Irishmen also excel in the writing of biography, though here they have been working a native vein and with tools stamped *made in Ireland*. If the Irishman is not actually self-centered let us say that at least he prefers talking about himself. Let us go even farther and admit that he has had a hard time preserving his ego through centuries of second-class citizenship in his own country, and that modern nationalism has made it necessary for him to claim descent from Gaelic royalty and membership in a native tradition as an act of defiance toward a foreign one.

Of course history will not support this attractive supposition because the Irishman was like that long before the coming of either Gaul or Saxon. Some Roman historian, Tacitus I think, describes a Celt he saw in Rome, big with the pride of ancestors. And one thinks of the long medieval tradition of biographical writing in Ireland from the *Confession of Saint Patrick* to the many saints' lives, genealogies, and the great annals which record the biographies of whole clans and septs. Each clan chieftain in medieval Ireland had his own poet-in-residence to compose and recite elaborate, and largely fictitious, ac-

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counts of the exploits of himself and his ancestors. Small wonder then that Irishmen have continued to write about themselves. George Moore's *Hail and Farewell,* Gogarty's *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street,* the autobiographies of Yeats and Sean O'Casey, and of course *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are not merely products of a contemporary and sophisticated literary milieu, but are actually a set of milestones on a road that comes a long way across the bog and is well marked by such names as W. R. Le Fanu, William Carleton, Jonah Barrington and Theobald Wolfe Tone—"half-mounted gentlemen, gentlemen every inch of them or gentlemen to the backbone."

Sean O'Casey's chronicle of his life and times, written in six installments over a fifteen-year period beginning in 1939 and now assembled into a handsome, boxed, two-volume set entitled *Mirror in My House,* displays some of the qualities one finds in the work of his predecessors. Like Yeats recreating Maude Gonne until she stands before him like a living child to drive him wild again, O'Casey conjures up the long-dead past of a long-dead Dublin—the tenements of his youth with its dung-collectors, its consumptive children playing on the pavements before the Georgian doorways, and the hawthorn tree at the end of the street which gave the neighborhood its only scent of beauty. He does this so that his reader's heart beats with some of his own fierce anger and exaltation. There is too a scorn for dates, as though O'Casey preferred to have us see the people and places not as he actually saw them but as he sees them now, playing their parts once again in a kind of pageant, with gaudy costume and magnificent musical accompaniment. One looks in vain for the date of his marriage, the births of his children, his meeting Lady Gregory, Yeats, Shaw or Jim Larkin, though each is brought back to life for us as only a biographer who is also a great dramatist could have done it.

There is also a lack of dependence upon fact—Matthew Arnold

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once noted the Celt's disposition in this regard—which is not to say that O'Casey makes free with the truth but that he breathes life—a more important ingredient than fact—into it. Where facts are literally vital, as in his account of his row with Yeats over the rejection of *The Silver Tassie* or the hilarious account of Shaw's standing security for him when he rented a house in Devonshire, he can be fulsome. But even here he is still more interested in the dramatic rather than the historical elements of his material. And the story rings true precisely because it is artfully told.

Despite a frequent lushness in the prose, which seems to owe as much to James Joyce at it does to the King James Bible, his addiction to fighting over old battles and castigating thrice-routed foes, and his inability to visualize himself as objectively and as compellingly as he does the other actors in his cast, *Mirror in My House* is a real performance. Some of O'Casey's critics —Brooks Atkinson for instance—think that his reputation may ultimately rest more on the autobiographies than on the plays. This is certainly not to deny that O'Casey is one of the great dramatists of our time but rather to point out the amazing achievement of the autobiographies.

I have always felt that the autobiographies, which he started to write in the thirties after one of his finest plays (*Within the Gates,* 1933) had been produced, and just before one of his worst (*The Star Turns Red,* 1940), became the stage where his genius has found the more congenial surroundings. Certainly few of his plays, or the moments in them, can compete with the variegated farce of "Cat 'n Cage," the melodramatic violence passing quickly into sex and farce in "The Rail," the tragedy of a small boy bewildered by the comedy attendant upon his father's funeral in "His Father's Funeral," or the many people who pass briefly through the pages of *Mirror in My House,* like the bargeman whose comment on life is, "We all go like that poor spit . . . a gathering together, a second or so in the mouth,

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a sudden jet of life, an' we're out of sight of all," or the workman who says of young Johnnie on his first job, "Give him a shovel . . . for he'll be penethratin' one of us if he thries to use a pick."

In describing the change that took place in his own development as dramatist, when he shifted from realism to expressionism, O'Casey once summed it up by asserting that he had merely left Juno for a date with another dame. But I suspect that the parting was all a cod, for, fortunately, she still continued to walk through the pages of *Mirror in My House*.

Back to Tradition

CATHOLIC CHURCH MUSIC. By Paul Hume. Dodd, Mead. $4.50.

By FRANK GETLEIN

THE SUBTITLE of this invaluable, complete and desperately needed volume is "A Practical Guide for the Choir Loft." That it is and, in the long run, that is unquestionably going to be the great service the book will perform. It is also, however, a running argument in favor of a return to common sense, tradition and liturgical correctness in Church music.

When one considers the early fate of the first of the great labor encyclicals, the reception given to the repeated papal pleas to get rid of Victorian music-hall style and Italian Opera in music intended for the Mass is, on the whole, rather heartening. It took decades for the administrators of the Church to conform to the mind of the Church in regard to labor. The change has been much more rapid in music. Kicking and screaming, perhaps, the old line churchman is being dragged back to tradition, but back he is coming.

The general movement should benefit greatly from the publication of Mr. Hume's book. Mr. Hume is the Washington music critic who was on the receiving end of one of Harry Truman's rare brushes with the arts. The "fame" attending the occasion has perhaps obscured the man himself. He is a first-rate critical intelligence as well as a choir director, organist and concert soloist. The combination is rare and it is precisely what was needed for the job the book undertakes.

The book dissects the situation of Church music as it exists in most American parishes, examines the several parts, shows clearly what must be done, why it ought to be done and, in mechanical and psychological detail, how it can be done. It shows the varying and complex relationships between the parts and puts them back together as a functioning musical organization playing its full part in praising God and contributing to the spiritual life of the parish.

One of the best things in the book, for the general reader, is the critical analysis, in musical terms, of several of the grand old hymns with which so many parishes seem to be stuck: "Good-night, Sweet Jesus," "O Lord I Am Not Worthy"

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and "Mother Dear, O Pray for Me" among others.

A nice feature of the book is that even the musically illiterate can read it and not only be fully convinced by the argument but learn quite a lot about music.

Appendices include various papal documents on the subject, professional bibliographies, a bibliography of records, a list of Masses and other music with helpful descriptions, and a series of breathing and vocal exercises for the choir. That last note indicates a stress on practicality that is always present. This book should be in the possession of every Catholic connected with Church music and every seminarian who hopes to be a pastor.

Cultural Crisis

SOCIETY AND SELF IN THE NOVEL. Edited by Mark Schorer. Columbia University Press. $3.50.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

ABSTRACTLY, one would think that our times would be rich in the social criticism of art. Ours is a historicist age, conscious of time, of cultures and civilizations. And Arnold Toynbee was, for a while, the hero of hundreds of thousands of *Time* readers. And yet, this fascination for history and society has produced very little that is worthwhile in the critical discipline.

On the one hand, there have been mountains of mechanistic sociology purporting to be concerned with esthetics and, worse, the "Party approach" of the thirties which estimated a writer on the basis of his politics. And on the other hand, a few serious and enduring works, an Arnold Hauser, a Georg Lukacs (who somehow maintained his integrity within a commitment to Stalinism), a Parrington. The reason for this disproportion is complex, but it is rooted in the same general phenomenon which separated the serious artist from his social context. The poet as lonely man, as secular saint, as enemy of society, has been accompanied by the critic as close textual

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analyst: both have lost their sense of the larger historical movement, their feeling for the whole.

This situation is extremely apparent in this collection of English Institute Essays which are consciously directed toward a social consideration of the novel. Four of the essays in this book promise to deal with the writer in relation to the world about him, yet only one even makes a serious attempt at following the announced purpose. And this is all the more paradoxical because of the editor's grasp of the basic problem. In his *Foreword,* Mark Schorer writes of our "cultural crisis": "The documentary novel, reaching toward social history, . . . shows us instead only the power of social authority. . . . The evocative novel, reaching toward the condition of poetry . . . demonstrates inversely that the gap between the individual human being and the social circumstances in which he exists has become hazardously wide."

That is an excellent formulation of the problem we face. But the essay on "Nineteenth Century English Fiction" by G. Armour Craig never comes to grips with it at all, F. W. Dupree's brief piece on Proust suggests some aspects of the theme but never really meets it head on, and similarly with the rest of the social criticism in this volume. Only Mr. Schorer's own contribution, an analysis of Sinclair Lewis, is clearly addressed to the subject matter of the book.

Nowhere, except in a few of the comments in the *Foreword,* do we get a feeling of the cultural crisis, of its causes and possible roads toward its resolution. For even when the critics sit down and consciously orient themselves toward the social context, the fragmentary, the *aperçu,* the textual explication, or the investigation into sources and parallels dominate. In this sense, we can take Mr. Schorer's introductory comments and apply them to the volume which they introduce, for this book is a symptom of a continuing cultural crisis in criticism as well as an aborted attempt to deal with that same crisis in literature itself.

The answer? That is not easy,

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but it lies, I think, along a precarious line between two extremes. On the one hand, we need critics who will have a consciousness of the whole, of the sweep, the movement of our literature, and its relation to the world about us; on the other hand, this generalization must always fear its own degeneration into large and moralistic statements about the *zeitgeist* which then dominate the individual works which are to be considered. Right now, the second problem is not so pressing, the too-easy universals of the thirties no longer oppress us. What we need is more of the first element, more of the feel for movement. And in this volume devoted to the role of society in relation to the artist, that is, unfortunately, quite absent.

Town and Gown

A SMALL FIRE: By Gladys Schmitt. Dial Press. $3.50.

By DACHINE RAINER

THIS IS the story of an enigmatic, youngish man who comes, in a professional capacity, to a second-rate school of music, somewhere in the Philadelphia area; he brings with him a reputation of musical sensibility and rumors of gracious living in New York, which he makes no effort to live down. His colleagues, being gregarious, homogeneous and ordinary, are enraged by his aloofness, his indifference to academic traditions, his failure to blend and, what is most unforgivable, since it is incomprehensible and consequently frightening, his fundamental difference from themselves. He has inner resources they cannot fathom, and a life apart from the campus life that so totally absorbs them, that he keeps hidden. I should say they find him *negative*—a term frequently applied by the nervously apathetic to the painfully aware.

By "they," I mean everyone but "the understanding woman," a voice teacher in her mid-thirties, who, giving every evidence of being

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more sexually frustrated if not particularly different in any other manner from her associates, is intrigued and drawn towards the baffling newcomer. *A Small Fire* is actually her story, told in the first person, not entirely candid, and filled with a superfluity of bathing and domesticity when she is not teaching. Her intimates are metallic, unalive people; their neuroses, however intense, fail to animate them, and even their hysterical seizures seem rather introverted.

I cannot quite determine whether this is due to a failure of Miss Schmitt's style, or whether it is, conversely, that she has so successfully captured a certain kind of academic mind which now, more than ever before, is synonymous with the unrealized creative person. I suspect it is the latter, for when she abandons these types and moves on, as she does in the last forty or so pages of the novel, to entirely different people, to the poor Slovak parents of the hero, it all becomes astonishingly alive and profoundly moving. It is only after the hero's failure at a Town Hall Concert, at which the voice teacher has put in a surreptitious appearance, that the book leaps into tense, turbulent, exceedingly impassioned and convincing prose. The heroine spends half the cold, windswept, rainy night in pursuit of her beloved, frantic with terror that he may, in his humiliation, be doing himself some bodily harm.

Now that they are reconciled, the lovers with one another and Miss Schmitt with her characters, one can only wish that they all take up life, and pursuit of the arts, in some non-academic environment; for some, as Miss Schmitt ably demonstrates, it is certain death.

REVIEWERS

David H. Greene, Professor of English at New York University, is completing a biography of John M. Synge.

Frank Getlein is art critic for the Milwaukee *Journal*.

Michael Harrington is director of the American Traditions Project, The Fund for the Republic.

Dachine Rainer is poet, novelist and critic. Her most recent novel is *A Room at the Inn*.

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